



# NEWS

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## **Announcing the 2001 Clean Air Champions!**

**What does a local television weathercaster, a Berkeley grass-roots organizer, a "car sharing" entrepreneur, an 18-year old Harvard-bound environmentalist and a Silicon Valley software engineer all have in common?**

**All are winners of this year's Clean Air Champions award!**

**"Clean Air Champions are all exceptional individuals who are recognized because of their efforts to keep Bay Area air clean," said Air District Executive Officer Ellen Garvey. "We're thrilled to find such diverse examples of the clean air spirit!"**

**The Clean Air Champions Award is an annual program to honor Bay Area individuals who are committed to clean air. A consortium of clean air advocates--including the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, the American Lung Association, RIDES for Bay Area Commuters, LIVE 105, KCBS All News Radio and the U.S. EPA--sponsor this award. The Air District Board of Directors will honor the award winners during a public presentation on September 5, 2001, 9:30 a.m. at 939 Ellis Street, 7<sup>th</sup> floor Board Room, in San Francisco.**

### **About The Winners**

#### **Jami Caseber --West Berkeley Environmental Activist (510) 548-0861**

**Jami Caseber**, a long-time resident of West Berkeley, got involved with air quality issues 13 years ago out of a concern about industry polluting the air. He founded the group Citizens Opposing a Polluting Environment (COPE), which eventually persuaded the City of Berkeley to create an Environmental Commission, which Jami currently chairs. Thanks to Jami and over two years of continuous effort, Berkeley recently passed an ordinance banning wood burning fireplaces in new construction. Jami does what he does because often there's no one else to do it. As he says, "everyone has to breathe air -- it's a matter of environmental justice. If each of us does our part, things get better."

#### **Roberta Gonzales--KPIX Weather Anchor (415) 765-8984**

**Roberta Gonzales**, the energetic, informative weathercaster on Channel Five Eyewitness News was selected for how enthusiastically she promotes clean air on the air! Besides her daily air quality reports and her past work promoting the Spare the Air children's calendar, Roberta has done community work with the American Lung Association and is one of the few

weather anchors who utilizes a regional Air Quality Index map on TV. "As a mother of a child who suffers from asthma, it is my duty to do my part to Spare The Air." Roberta said when she was notified of the award. "As a weathercaster in the Bay Area, I feel it is my responsibility to keep the public informed on existing conditions that contribute to the quality of air we all breathe. To be named as a Clean Air Champion touches my soul. It means I am doing my job as a parent and a professional and I thank you for such an incredible honor."

### **Aaron Mihaly--Teen-age Environmentalist from Marin (510) 622-2228**

**Aaron Mihaly's** activism in support of clean air and the environment started as early as the fourth grade when he took part in a class project to save endangered shrimp. Since then he has made a monetary donation to the Trust for Public Land, participated in a battery-recycling project and has worked with environmental organizations in Marin County.

For the last two years Aaron organized Bike to School Day at his high school, Marin Academy. This event encourages people to not drive cars to school. Bike to School Day has been noticeably successful. Some faculty members even took part. He says biking and walking are just two ways the individual can help to clean up the air. The Clean Air Champion acknowledges how difficult it can be to nudge fellow high school students away from youthful thoughts of cars and driver's licenses. Says Aaron, "It's been a challenge-advocating environmental issues and not being a hypocrite".

Aaron graduated from Marin Academy in June and is spending the summer in Central America. He will start Harvard in the fall and even though he's not sure what form his activism will take, he intends to continue working for clean air.

### **Elizabeth Sullivan—Co-Director, City CarShare in San Francisco (415) 948-3549 or [elizabeth@citycarshare.org](mailto:elizabeth@citycarshare.org)**

It may seem like a contradiction, but **Elizabeth Sullivan's** job as an automobile fleet manager helps keep cars off the road. That's because the non-profit City CarShare program allows people to use cars only when they really need them. Sullivan says ownership encourages automobile use and discourages alternatives. Sullivan co-founded City CarShare in San Francisco as one alternative to help reduce air pollution and the other negative impacts of cars while giving people mobility when they need it. Since its inception in March 2001, City CarShare has already registered 560 members, who can check out cars in eight different locations, paying the costs on a per-use basis. Just recently City CarShare branched out their operation to include parts of the City of Oakland! "Car Sharing allows people to change their relationship to cars, so they think about each trip they take," Elizabeth says. "It's a response to our over-use of the automobile. It reduces our dependence on cars and enhances the environment."

### **Mike Thompson—San Jose Electric Car Advocate (408) 981-2049 or [m.t.thompson@ieee.org](mailto:m.t.thompson@ieee.org)**

**Mike Thompson** can best be described as an EV enthusiast, EV as in "electric vehicle". His resume as a volunteer advocate for clean air vehicles includes appearances at Earth Day festivities and other events. He also provides test drives of his own auto (a GM EV1), has given testimony about Zero Emission Vehicles before the California Air Resources Board (CARB) and maintains an EV/Clean Air website featuring exclusive content. He is a tireless activist. Mike has spoken out during the current power emergency in California. He is lobbying hard against diesel generation even for back up purposes.

Mike firmly believes that the individual can make a difference in cleaning the air. That belief motivates him to make as many appearances at public events as he does. Mike Thompson says he is "thrilled" to be named a Clean Air Champion. He adds, "I just can't wait to drive to San Francisco (for the awards presentation) and show off my EV1!"

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